

S. C. Environmental Justice Advisory Committee

Act 171, which passed the S. C. General Assembly in 1997, mandates that a governmental advisory committee be created to S. C. DHEC. The advisory committee consists of a commissioner, executive director, or executive head of each department or such head's designee from the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation, the University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health, Clemson University's Public Service Authority, South Carolina State University's Public Service Authority, and the State Ports Authority. The Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee of the Department of Health and Environmental Control shall serve as the chairperson of the advisory committee but shall not have a vote. S. C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will also staff this committee.

The Advisory Committee will:

- 1) Study and consider existing practices at state agencies related to environmental justice issues in economic development and revitalization projects in this state.
- 2) Study the availability and promotion of public awareness of public health and environmental information in a language other than English and make such recommendations as necessary to ensure that information handed out to the public by DHEC is available in another language.
- 3) Encourage collaborative problem-solving and efficient utilization of all existing resources
- 4) Consult with any requesting agency of SC to provide input for an environmental justice issue in connection with an economic development or revitalization project in SC during the term of the advisory committee
- 5) Consult the National Brownfields Association, South Carolina Chapter, to utilize its expertise in revitalization projects
- 6) Report existing practices of state agencies related to environmental justice considerations in economic development and revitalization projects in this State and make any recommendations in the report, which should be submitted no later than January 1, 2010.

Environmental Justice, as defined in Presidential Executive Order 12898, is “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

This legislation’s primary sponsor was Representative Harold Mitchell (Spartanburg County). Representative Mitchell has championed the redevelopment and reuse of properties within the Arkwright and Forest Park communities of Spartanburg. He did this by bringing together various stakeholders and using a collaborative problem-solving

approach to look at a problem and as a group finding a solution. His work has been documented in a DVD entitled, "Environmental Justice: The Power of Partnerships." For a copy of the CD, please contact DHEC's Office of Environmental Community Health at (803) 896-9730.

The Advisory Committee will hold its first meeting in October 2007.